



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
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HOWARD K. KOH, MD, MPH
COMMISSIONER

February 14, 2001

Dear Local Health Official:

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), Bureau of Environmental Health Assessment, and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DF&W), are sending the enclosed guidance documents concerning the new beaver-related legislation (Chapter 139 of the Acts of 2000) to help local health officials who are now, or may be in the future, dealing with beaver-related issues. MDPH and DF&W formed a coordinating committee to assist with the development of guidance that was mentioned in the letter MDPH and DF&W sent to local health officials on October 6, 2000. In addition to MDPH and DF&W, the committee is comprised of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP), the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards, the Massachusetts Health Officers Association, and the Massachusetts Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA). Concerns expressing the need for better clarity relating to the implementation of this new law prompted the enclosed guidance documents. They are meant to assist local health officials in determining beaver-related threats to public health and safety.

MDEP, with the assistance of MDPH and DF&W, has developed guidance for wetlands and water supplies. MDPH and DF&W recognize the need for Board of Health and Conservation Commission guidance to inter-relate effectively.

Within this packet, you will find:

- "Guidance for Boards of Health Implementing M.G.L. c.131, s.80A, Threats from Beaver and Muskrat-Related Activities," from MDPH.
- "Beaver Guidance Contacts," from MDPH

- Board of Health guidance material developed by Peter Kolodziej, Director of the TriTown Health Department

The latter is included for your information as an example of what one local health department has developed with regard to this issue.

MDPH is also finalizing work on the procedures for an appeals process as directed by and consistent with the legislation. A description of the process, in addition to an appeals form and other materials, will be sent as a follow-up to this letter.

Sincerely,

Howard A. Koh, M.D, M.P.H.
Commissioner, MDPH

David M. Peters,
Commissioner, DFW